
**Children & Family Services
Committee**

HB 1052

Brief Description: Creating the prevention quality council.

Sponsors: Representatives Kagi and Kenney; by request of Office of Financial Management.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Prevention Quality Council (Council).
- Requires state agencies operating or funding prevention programs to meet spending levels for evidence-based programs certified by the Council.

Hearing Date: February 10, 2005.

Staff: Cynthia Forland (786-7152).

Background:

As part of the 2003-05 state operating budget, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) was required to conduct research concerning the benefits and costs of prevention and early intervention programs for children and youth. The WSIPP was required to:

- review research assessing the effectiveness of prevention and early intervention programs concerning children and youth, including, but not limited to, programs designed to reduce the at-risk behaviors for children and youth identified in state law, and identify specific research-proven programs that produce a positive return on the dollar compared to the costs of the program;
- develop criteria designed to ensure quality implementation and program fidelity of research-proven programs in the state, including measures for ongoing monitoring and continual improvement of treatment delivery; and
- develop recommendations for potential state legislation that encourages local government investment in research-proven prevention and early intervention programs by reimbursing local governments for a portion of the savings that accrue to the state as the result of local investments in such programs.

The WSIPP report, which was completed in September 2004, concluded that certain well-implemented prevention and early intervention programs for youth can achieve significantly more benefits than costs, and that taxpayers will be better off if investments are made in these successful research-based programs. The WSIPP report also found the following:

- Some prevention and early intervention programs fail to generate more benefits than costs, and would be an inefficient use of taxpayer money.
- The market for rigorously researched prevention and early intervention programs is young, but is evolving quickly. Most high-quality evaluations have been completed only in the last two decades, and many new rigorous studies will become available in the years ahead.
- While Washington has taken significant steps in recent years, many currently funded prevention and early intervention programs in the state have not been rigorously evaluated. Thus, for many programs in Washington, there is insufficient evidence at this time to determine whether they produce positive or negative returns for taxpayers.

Based on these findings, the WSIPP concluded that in order to ensure the best possible return for Washington taxpayers the Legislature and Governor should:

- invest in research-proven "blue chip" prevention and early intervention programs, with most of the state's prevention portfolio spent on these proven programs;
- avoid spending money on programs where there is little evidence of program effectiveness;
- keep abreast of the latest research-based findings from around the United States to determine where there are opportunities to use taxpayer dollars wisely;
- embark on a strategy to evaluate Washington's currently funded programs to determine if benefits exceed costs;
- pay close attention to quality control and adherence to original program designs; and
- consider developing a strategy to encourage local government investment in research-proven programs.

Summary of Bill:

The Prevention Quality Council (Council) is created, and it is provided that the sections of the bill would constitute a new chapter in state law, to be known as "The Prevention and Early Intervention Quality and Accountability Act." The Council is to consist of the following nine members:

- the Director of the Office of Financial Management (OFM);
- the Superintendent of Public Instruction;
- the Secretaries of the Department of Social and Health Services, the Department of Health, and the Department of Corrections;
- and four members of the Legislature, one of whom is appointed by the chair of each of the two largest political caucuses of the Senate and House of Representatives, from among the members of the committees having jurisdiction over the omnibus operating budget.

The Council is required to meet at least annually to:

- identify state agencies operating or funding prevention programs;
- review research findings and recommendations of the WSIPP;
- identify gaps in available research and make recommendations to the Legislature regarding areas that should be prioritized for future research investments;
- certify, by affirmative vote of at least six members, evidence-based prevention programs for state funding; and
- recommend legislation modifying duties and services of state agencies as necessary to achieve the purposes of the bill.

The Council is required to contract with the WSIPP to conduct research and to report its findings to the Council and the public. Specifically, the WSIPP is required to:

- review evaluation and other research to identify evidence-based programs, whether operating in this state or elsewhere;
- estimate and compare the cost-effectiveness of prevention programs;
- periodically update its findings based on new or updated research;
- periodically review operations of certified evidence-based programs for fidelity to designs and models on which certification was based; and
- perform other research and analyses related to the purposes of this bill as the Council or the Legislature may direct, subject to available funding.

State agencies identified by the Council as operating or funding prevention programs are required to submit biennial reports to the council containing:

- a description of each prevention program on which the agency expends state funds, including but not limited to whether the program is an evidence-based program; and
- the percentage of state funds the agency receives for prevention programs that is being expended on evidence-based programs; and
- spend not less than the percentages of state funds specified below on certified evidence-based programs in the fiscal years specified:
 - 50 percent in fiscal year 2007;
 - 60 percent in fiscal year 2008; and
 - 70 percent in fiscal year 2009 and thereafter.

The following definitions apply to the terms used in the bill:

- "Cost-effective" means that cost savings to taxpayers realized over a reasonable period of time are greater than costs to taxpayers.
- "Evidence-based program" means a program that incorporates significant and relevant practices based on scientifically based research and is cost-effective.
- "Prevention and early intervention programs" means programs that are intended, through activities involving persons under 18 years of age, to prevent or reduce the future likelihood of any of the following outcomes:
 - commission of crime;
 - abuse of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs;
 - failure to graduate from high school;
 - pregnancy or parenting before age 18;
 - suicide or attempted suicide;
 - child abuse or neglect, as either victim or perpetrator;
 - domestic violence as defined in state law; or
 - other adverse outcomes identified by the Council.
- "Scientifically based research" means research that obtains reliable and valid knowledge by:
 - employing systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
 - involving rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn; and
 - relying on measurements or observational methods that provide reliable and valid data across evaluators and observers, across multiple measurements and observations, and across studies by the same or different investigators.

The Council is to select its chair from among the members, and may select such other officers as its members deem necessary. The OFM is required to provide staff services to the Council.

Members of the Council must serve without additional compensation, but legislative members are to be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with state law while attending sessions of the Council or on official business authorized by the Council. Nonlegislative members of the Council are to be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with state law relating to such reimbursement for elective and appointive officials and state employees.

The bill contains a severability clause.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.